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GENERAL

1. Greek ambassador incensed by Yugoslav statement on Tito's Ankara talks:


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The American embassy in Ankara reports that the Greek ambassador has expressed "surprise and chagrin" over the results of Tito's talks with the Turks, as announced by Yugoslav foreign minister Popovic. The ambassador was particularly incensed by the Yugoslav statement on the development of the Balkan treaty of friendship and cooperation into a firm military alliance. He feels that his government has been placed in the embarrassing position of being faced with Balkan pact understandings without prior consultation.

The Ambassador was not mollified by Turkish assurances that no commitments were reached during the conversations and that future Balkan pact developments would be subject to discussion with his government.

Comment: The Greeks, always sensitive to any reflections on their status in the Balkan pact, will protest any implication that they do not have an equal voice in tripartite planning. All three Balkan pact powers are favorably disposed toward the idea of a military alliance. Greece and Turkey, however, as members of NATO, have been advised not to make commitments which would risk involving NATO powers in conflicts the system is not designed to cover.

Popovic may have been exaggerating the extent of progress toward firm commitments actually obtained in the Yugoslav-Turkish talks in an attempt to emphasize Yugoslav good faith toward the West.  25X1A

SOVIET UNION

2. Malenkov protégé conspicuously absent from Moscow theater performance:

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Ambassador Bohlen notes that Maxim Z. Saburov was the only full member of the all-union party presidium absent from a Moscow performance of the Comedie

Francaise. He states that Saburov's failure to appear will probably give rise to rumors in Moscow, especially in view of the precedent of Beria's absence and Khrushchev's recently publicized criticism of Saburov's state planning committee. Bohlen cautions, however, that Saburov's absence is insufficient evidence from which to draw any conclusions.

Comment: Khrushchev severely criticized the state planning committee, which is headed by Saburov, but did not attack Saburov by name. A pointed attack on two ministers made in the same speech does not appear to have led to their dismissal.

Saburov is one of the most prominent of the "technicians" who have accompanied Malenkov in his rise to power. His removal from the presidium might well indicate a critical weakness in Malenkov's position. To the extent that the move could be traced to Khrushchev's influence, it would suggest that a major struggle for power has been developing.

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4. Rhee angered by South Korea's exclusion from "united action" program:

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President Rhee has expressed discouragement and anger over the failure of the United States to invite South Korea and Formosa to join the proposed "Southeast Asian anti-Communist

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pact."

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South Korea's public information chief believes the unfavorable attitude of the Philippines and Thailand toward the South Korean-sponsored anti-Communist conference was a direct result of American pressure.

Comment: South Korea's exclusion from the Asian collective defense proposal and the lack of enthusiasm shown toward Rhee's proposed conference may have a sobering effect on Rhee and his lieutenants, who have overestimated South Korea's potential for leadership in Asia. Rhee's antagonism toward Japan and most of the Western European nations would hinder the effectiveness of an Asian alliance in which South Korea participated.

5. Vehicle factory in Communist China to have annual capacity of 30,000 units:

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The authoritative Peiping People's Daily stated on 19 March that a motor vehicle manufacturing works being built under the Soviet aid program--due to be completed in 1959--will have an annual capacity of 30,000 vehicles.

Comment: There are now probably fewer than 100,000 vehicles, mostly trucks, in Communist China. The reported capacity of the new works exceeds current annual imports, almost entirely from other Orbit countries, by a large margin.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

6. Tonkin commander critical of French strategy:

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The American consul at Hanoi reported on 16 April that General Cogne had told him that General Navarre and his command have made no effort to exploit strategic factors in defending Dien Bien Phu. He cited as an example the failure to transfer six battalions in Annam to Tonkin for lightning raids on Viet Minh supply bases whose defenses have been stripped. Cogne pointed out that such attacks could relieve the pressure on Dien Bien Phu.

Cogne said the battle of Dien Bien Phu was essentially being fought by his air force. He stated that when the French high command beseeches the United States for more planes and receives them, it finds itself short of pilots and hampered by an inadequate organization. Proper air support could radically change the picture at Dien Bien Phu.

The French officer feels the high command should never have accepted battle in the remote Thai country. He felt that the seven-year battle for the Tonkin delta might very well be lost at Dien Bien Phu.

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